

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to address their remarks to the Chair.

ADOPT A CUBAN POLITICAL PRISONER

(Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, today I stand in this great Chamber of democracy to adopt a Cuban political prisoner. Although this idea may seem like an idea that has no effect, it actually has a profound and everlasting impact on those who are enslaved.

Three years ago, Castro, whom we know to be an evil dictator who abuses the human rights of his people, swept the streets of Cuba and imprisoned over 70 innocent men and women who were calling for democracy on the island.

One of these victims is Lester Gonzales Penton. This young man who will turn 28 next week was sentenced to 20 years and is currently held in one of Castro's most shameful prisons, Kilo 7.

I am honored to adopt Lester, and I urge my colleagues to join me in adopting these courageous, peaceful activists, activists who sit in squalid jails for crimes we consider to be some of the most sacred rights: freedom, democracy, and freedom of expression.

We stand here today to honor these heroic souls and demand their release. I invite my colleagues to join us at noon today at HC-7 to hear more about our Adopt a Cuban Political Prisoner Campaign.

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AN ETHICS PROCESS IN LIMBO

(Mr. HOYER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, the integrity of the people's House supersedes the interests of any individual Member who is privileged to serve here, of either political party.

We bear an individual duty, as well as a collective obligation, to abide by the highest ethical standards and to conduct ourselves in a manner that instills public confidence in this institution.

Yet, today, the ethics process in this House is at a standstill. Our bipartisan process to address alleged ethics violations has been stymied by a partisan roadblock that is inconsistent with the purpose and history of the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct.

The gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. MOLLOHAN), the ranking member of the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct, has introduced a resolution that would remove this roadblock and restore the ethics rules that were

adopted on a bipartisan basis in 1997. I urge my colleagues to support the gentleman from West Virginia's (Mr. MOLLOHAN) resolution.

Let us restore the ethics rules that guided us for the last four Congresses. Let us ensure that our ethics process is bipartisan and commands the respect of the American people. We ought to expect no less of ourselves.

CELEBRATING THE VALUABLE WORK OF ROTARIANS IN RUSSIA

(Mr. WILSON of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, as a 30-year member of Rotary International, I am proud to recognize the valuable work of new Rotarians in Russia.

Although Rotary in Russia is only 11 years old, the 100-year-old Rotary organization is already strengthening Russian communities, helping to enrich multinational relations and improving economic conditions in the new democratic Russia.

Today, I met with a group of Russian Rotarians who are visiting our country hosted by Neil Young of the Towsontowne, Maryland, Rotary Club. Our visitors and their sponsors are enthusiastic to learn more about how American small businessmen organize and manage their businesses. They will be able to apply the lessons they learned to help Russian businesses survive, grow and create jobs and consumer products for their communities.

Rotarians throughout the world continue to promote networking for community development and leadership, they should feel proud that their efforts are making a positive difference for millions of people.

In conclusion, God bless our troops and we will never forget September 11.

THE BUDGET

(Mr. COOPER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. COOPER. Mr. Speaker, today, the House of Representatives will start its annual debate on the budget, one of the most important debates of the year.

I would urge all of my colleagues to vote against the rule setting up the terms of this debate. Why vote against the rule? Because the Blue Dog Coalition alternative, the amendment which had 12 key procedural reforms to get our Nation off its current drunken borrowing and deficit binge, none of those wise provisions were included for debate.

Why? Nine Republicans on the House Committee on Rules voted against such common-sense terms as, for example, having a cost estimate on every bill or allowing a recorded vote on items that spend more than \$50 million. I do not

know but it is very important that House Members vote against the rule so that we can have a fairer debate on our budget process and support the reforms in the Blue Dog Coalition.

SOCIAL SECURITY

(Mr. PRICE of Georgia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, in 2008, only 3 years from now, the first baby boomers will start collecting retirement benefits from Social Security, and for these people the system has worked very well, but when our children and grandchildren get set to retire, the only thing that will greet them is frustration, grief and heartache at what we did today or, better yet, what we did not do to fix Social Security.

Mr. Speaker, I have practiced medicine for over 20 years, and I know that in order to treat the right disease you have got to make the right diagnosis, and the right diagnosis for the Social Security system is that we are on an unsustainable course. The right treatment is to fix the problem today rather than passing the problem on to future generations.

If we continue to postpone solutions, our only alternatives will be large tax increases or significant benefit reductions.

The goal of our ongoing discussion is not to pin blame on anyone. The goal is to have a system that will work for our children and our grandchildren, one that is stable, funded and secure.

A Social Security system that was designed for the world of 1935 will not work for the world of 2035 and beyond. Changes must be made, and the sooner we act the more secure we all will be.

VITAL CONTRIBUTIONS OF AFRICAN AMERICAN NEWSPAPERS THROUGHOUT OUR HISTORY

(Mr. McDERMOTT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, it is an honor and a privilege to rise today to recognize the vital contributions of African American newspapers throughout our history and the continuing need for their perspective today. The Seattle Media in my district is a good example.

For nearly 180 years, black newspapers have provided their readers with not only the news of the day but with hope for a better tomorrow, and for the past 65 years the National Newspaper Publishers Association has been the standard bearer in that proud tradition.

A federation of more than 200 black community newspapers, the NNPA has provided outstanding service to its member papers and the 15 million Americans who rely on them for news.